United Nations A/69/129

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 July 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Agenda item 9 of the preliminary list*
Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award, 2014

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in resolution 36/201. The report covers the year 2014, and was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112.

* A/69/50.

14-57474 (E) 220714

Please recycle

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, 2014

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, by its resolution 36/201, the General Assembly established the United Nations Population Award. The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, or to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureate for the Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 Member States of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the United Nations Population Award, so that an individual and an institution could share the award.

4. In its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

5. The current elected members of the Committee are Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Grenada, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar and the United Republic of Tanzania.

6. During its first organizational meeting, on 14 January 2014, the Committee elected Ambassador Edita Hrdá (Czech Republic) as the Chair for 2014.

II. United Nations Population Award, 2014

7. The Committee received 24 nominations from qualified nominators for the 2014 Award. Of these, 10 were for the individual category and 14 for the institutional category. On 19 March 2014, in accordance with its mandate and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Father Aldo Marchesini of Italy in the individual category and the non-governmental organization Jhpiego (originally known as the Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynaecology and Obstetrics) of the United States of America in the institutional category.

8. The Committee selected Father Marchesini in recognition of his decades of dedicated work in Uganda and Mozambique as a medical doctor, particularly for his pioneering role in the treatment of obstetric fistulas in Mozambique and for being a unique and inspiring role model and mentor of other doctors, demonstrated through his perseverance, courage and compassion as he worked in the most impoverished and challenging conditions, often as the only medical doctor and with limited resources. The Committee cited his exemplary care and concern for his patients, which spurred him to raise funds to finance their treatments and often to pay for their transportation, meals and clothes, as well as for his instrumental role in finding sufficient financial support to cover the salaries of the hardworking staff at the

Quelimane Provincial Hospital. In addition, the Committee considered Father Marchesini's dedication to serving the women of Africa, their families, communities and beyond, and for popularizing his knowledge in books about fistula treatments.

9. Father Marchesini is a Catholic priest and a medical doctor from Italy. In 1962, he entered the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, and was ordained a priest in 1969. He obtained his degree in medicine and surgery in 1966 and a postgraduate degree in hygiene and scholastic medicine from the University of Bologna, Italy, in 1968. He also received a postgraduate degree in hygiene and tropical medicine from the University of Lisbon in 1973. From 1970 to 1974, Father Marchesini worked in Uganda as a medical doctor, and was involved in the treatment of women with obstetric fistulas.

10. Father Marchesini has been involved with population issues for over 43 years. When he moved to Mozambique in 1974, he worked in the most impoverished areas, often as the only medical doctor and with limited resources. Soon after his arrival, he started treating obstetric fistulas and for many years, was the only medical doctor in the country treating that medical condition. Today, all the medical doctors treating fistulas in Mozambique were trained by him. He has been successful in raising funds, not only to finance the treatment of patients, but also to pay for transportation, meals and clothing. He was instrumental in finding financial support for the Quelimane Provincial Hospital to pay salaries to the staff.

11. Father Marchesini was kidnapped and imprisoned a number of times by rival groups during the civil war that rampaged Mozambique after its independence. His dedication and reputation in the country gained him a lot of respect and the southern African media has called him the "Doctor Schweitzer of today". He has received many awards, including the Award of the Municipality of Bologna (2000), the *Cuore Amico* ("Friendly Heart") award given to Italian missionaries (2001), Knight of the Order of the Star of Solidarity of the Republic of Italy (2002), Certificate of Honour from the Ministry of Health of Mozambique and the End Fistula Campaign (2011), and the Certificate of Honour from the Zambézia Provincial Directorate (2013).

12. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selected Jhpiego of the United States of America for its 40 years of dedication and commitment to saving the lives of women and families worldwide; for working with health experts, Governments and community leaders to help countries to care for themselves by training competent health workers, strengthening health systems and improving delivery of care, and for developing innovative, evidence-based interventions to break down barriers to high-quality health care, from home to hospital, and village to the city. The Committee cited the involvement of Jhpiego in recognizing the need of family planning and reproductive health, introducing laparoscopy and modern contraceptives; its extensive expertise in areas of maternal and child health, infection prevention and control, HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases, cervical cancer, and the development of low-cost innovations that save women's lives. In addition, the Committee considered the role of Jhpiego in leading the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) global flagship programmes, which made incredible progress in reducing child and maternal mortality and increased access to reproductive health services.

13. Jhpiego is an international, non-profit organization specialized in maternal health. Founded in 1973 by Dr. Theodore M. King as the Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynaecology and Obstetrics, the mission of Jhpiego is

to prevent the needless deaths of women and their families. In the beginning, its programme was focused on sending health professionals to Baltimore for training in new contraceptive techniques, particularly the use of laparoscopy, but Dr. King and his colleagues soon realized that they would have a greater impact by educating new health cadres in their own countries.

14. For over 40 years, Jhpiego has provided assistance to close to 160 countries; today it has field offices in more than 30 countries worldwide. The organization has various programme areas, including maternal, newborn and child health; family planning and reproductive health; HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment; infection prevention and control; malaria prevention and treatment; cervical cancer prevention and treatment; tuberculosis; urban health; and contraceptive innovations. Jhpiego works in partnership with numerous national and international organizations. It has a long list of publications presenting the results of its achievements, but its major concentration is in the preparation of manuals and training materials. Jhpiego maintains an informative website, www.jhpiego.org.

15. Jhpiego has trained more than half a million health professionals in family planning and reproductive health. It is a recognized leader in revitalizing post-partum family planning programmes, in promoting long-acting reversible and permanent methods of contraception, in integrating family planning into maternal and child health service, and particularly in developing low-cost innovations that save lives. Jhpiego was recognized as an innovative leader in the early 1970s with the introduction of laparoscopy as a safer and low-cost procedure for sterilization. In just two decades, Jhpiego had trained more than 5,000 physicians, nurses and technical personnel from more than 1,300 institutions in 108 countries in the use of laparoscopes. Those efforts culminated in the performance of tubal ligations, using minilaparotomy under local anaesthesia, thus reducing risks and costs. Another major innovation was the development of the "no-touch" technique to insert intrauterine devices, reducing the risks of infection. These developments paved the way for the involvement of nurses, midwives and other paramedical workers in a field that used to belong only to physicians. Concerned about the high incidence of abortion, Jhpiego launched the Post-Abortion Care Consortium, an international effort to ensure that the complications of abortion are managed safely and that future abortions are prevented by providing better family planning services. Jhpiego has been recognized numerous times from national Governments, international organizations and local communities.

III. Financial matters

16. As at 31 December 2013, the Trust Fund of the United Nations Population Award had a total fund balance of $1,736,784.68. Interest income in 2013 was $13,031.76. Expenditure in 2013, including prizes awarded to the two laureates, totalled $82,766.45.